

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended): A method of producing a rubber composition which comprises mixing a curing agent with a curable rubber composition comprising at least 70 mass% of styrene-butadiene rubber having ~~20~~ 35-60 mass% of a bound styrene content as a rubber component and containing not less than 60 parts by weight of a reinforcing filler and not less than 50 parts by weight of a softening agent extractable with acetone-chloroform after curing, based on 100 parts by weight of ~~a-~~the rubber component, in a continuous mixing machine.

2. (original): A method of producing a rubber composition according to claim 1, wherein the continuous mixing machine has a plurality of feeding ports.

3. (previously presented): A method of producing a rubber composition according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the continuous mixing machine has twin screws.

4. (original): A method of producing a rubber composition according to claim 3, wherein the twin screws of the continuous mixing machine are rotated in the same direction.

5. (previously presented): A method of producing a rubber composition according to claims 1 or 2, wherein the curing agent is charged into the continuous mixing machine from a feeding port other than a feeding port for the reinforcing filler and mixed therein.

6. (original): A method of producing a rubber composition according to claim 5, wherein the curing agent is charged from the feeding port nearer than the feeding port for the reinforcing filler to an outlet of the continuous mixing machine.

7. (previously presented): A method of producing a rubber article which comprises extruding a rubber composition obtained by the method as claimed in claims 1 or 2 into a given shape.

8. (new): A method of producing a rubber composition according to claim 1, wherein not less than 60 parts by weight of carbon black is included as the reinforcing filler.

9. (new): A method of producing a rubber composition according to claim 1, wherein the amount of the softening agent is not less than 70 parts by weight.